

July 3, 1967

# HOW NASSER USED POISON GAS

Published below, for the first time, is the proof that Egypt used poison gas in its war against Yemen. The proof is in these secret documents of the International Red Cross. The full text has not appeared before in English.

At GENEVA  
The undersigned doctors, members of the International Committee of the Red Cross medical mission to the Yemen, arrived at Gahar [North Yemen] in the Wadi Herran, on May 15, 1967, following an appeal for assistance from the inhabitants who claimed to have been under gas attack by airplanes on the morning of May 10, 1967.

The following statements were made by the inhabitants who witnessed the incident:

1. Seventy-five persons died of poison gas shortly after the raid.

They showed the following symptoms: shortness of breath, coughing, pink foam at the mouth, general edema, especially the face; no physical injuries.

2. The undersigned doctors examined the four surviving victims and observed the following:

-Subjective symptoms: burning eyes and trachea, internal thorax pain, extreme fatigue, anorexia.

-Objective symptoms: dry cough, negative auscultation in two patients, signs of bronchitis in the other two, conjunctivitis, facial edema, no traumatic lesions, tympanum intact.

3. The undersigned doctors examined a corpse, four days after death and 12 hours after burial.

Immediately, the common grave was opened, and, well before the corpses—which were only wrapped in shrouds, without coffins—were visible, there was a sweet penetrating smell not unlike garlic. The bodies showed no traumatic lesions. The skin was pink. Advanced and general edema all over the body.

Examination of lungs: reddish-brown throughout, enlargement, consistence and fragility greatly increased, crepitation considerably reduced.

The undersigned doctors draw the following logical conclusions from their findings:

I. None of the victims examined, whether survivors or corpses exhumed from the common grave, showed any traumatic lesions.

II. The statements made by witnesses who escaped from the raid unharmed, in respect of the circumstances in which 75 inhabitants were killed, are consistent with the International Committee of the Red Cross medical mission's own findings by examination of the four survivors and the corpse exhumed from one of the common graves.

III. The cause of death in the case of the corpse examined was pulmonary edema. The over-all consistency of the ICRC medical mission's findings shows that in all

probability this pulmonary edema was caused by inhalation of toxic gas.

(Signed) Raymond Janin, ICRC Doctor-Delegate  
Willy Brutschin, ICRC Doctor-Delegate

Signed at town Najran, May 18, 1967

Here is the forensic medical report by the University of Bern Institute of Forensic Medicine:

Dear Sirs—

In accordance with your instructions of May 21, 1967, we have duly examined the report drawn up by two doctors of the International Committee of the Red Cross on observations made by them after the bombing of a village in the Yemen. Their investigations can be summarized in the following manner.

1. Information collected from the survivors in that village regarding the death of 75 persons.

2. Medical examination of four survivors.

3. Examination of a corpse four days after death and 12 hours after burial.

The phenomena observed are the effects of skin irritation, conjunctivitis and of mucus in the respiratory tract and lungs. General edema had been noted, especially facial and also haemorrhagic pulmonary edema. On autopsy, red hepatization and a liquid of reddish scrapings were observed in the lungs.

The observations collected are gradually diversified and unspecific, but form a definite entity as a whole.

We know of no epidemical disease presenting a similar symptomatology or clinical development. The conclusion, according to which the death of the deceased persons as a result of bombing is ascribed to a toxic gas, seems to us to be perfectly justified. This conclusion is supported by the total absence of traumatic lesions caused by the effects of pressure-explosion.

Amongst the various poison gases which can produce the effects observed, phosphonic esters—nervine gas—would not, in our opinion, be involved, in view of the local irritations observed. Their effects would, moreover, have been characterized by copious salivation, myositis and muscular cramp.

On the other hand, the employment of halogenous derivatives—phosgene, mustard gas, lewisite, chloride or cyanogen bromide, or Clark I and II, etc.—would appear to us the most likely. However, neither bromide nor cyanogen chloride causes an edemic irritation of the skin. This also applies to phosgene.

As against this, all the symptoms observed are explainable by the hypothesis of the use of mustard gas, lewisite or similar substances. The odor resembling garlic, smelled on opening the common grave, would indicate the employment rather of mustard gas. These toxic substances are pulverized when the bomb explodes in the form of aerosol.

(Signed) Yours sincerely,  
Professor D. E. Lauppi,  
Director of the Institute